

AUG 17 2016

EPA-REGION 10

U.S. EPA  
ATTN: Harbor Comments  
805 SW Broadway, Suite 500  
Portland, OR 97205

I am not in support of the Environmental Protection Agency's current plan to dig up portions of the Willamette River that runs through downtown Portland. This stretch of the river is a designated Superfund Site, and we've known it needs to be cleaned up for some time, but this plan is not the way to do it. The plan would over-rely on dredging to remove contaminants that are believed to still be at the bottom of the river. This would be a long, expensive process. The EPA has estimated the cost at anywhere from about \$750 million to nearly \$1.5 billion, and the shortest time frame for completion would be seven years.

My concern is that even after making this huge investment, Portland and its residents and businesses wouldn't get their money's worth. This money could be much better spent on other local problems, such as relieving the traffic congestion in the City of Portland, or helping with the homeless. This EPA plan reminds me of another long-range plan that never came to be. It's like the bridge that was to be built between Oregon and Washington. We spent millions of dollars on it, and never got anything for it. I would hate to see that be the case with the Willamette River cleanup.

In fact, nature may just take care of the problem itself. A study from two years ago shows that there's been a significant reduction in contaminants in the Willamette since the EPA study done ten years earlier. I can see how this is true. I have an oil tank in my backyard. It's been pumped out, but I can't afford to have the soil tested to see if there's been any contamination. However, I've been told that the longer something like this sits, the more likely contaminants would dissipate to where any harm to the soil is insignificant. We should at least try to allow nature to take care of the problem in the Willamette's riverbed in this same way before we begin digging it up.

The economic impacts of the current EPA plan could have far-reaching effects. I no longer spend much time on the river, but many still fish and water ski there. Many others, including tourists, frequent the businesses along the waterfront. Those making a living from the river in any way are paying their share of taxes. If the river cannot be used in the same way, those taxes will have to be paid in another way. I'm on a fixed income, and I would be most unhappy if they had to come from my pocketbook.

Let's allow well-informed locals to have a real say in how the Willamette River's cleanup progresses and find a plan that works well for everyone.

Sincerely,

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Portland, OR 97217